



Crime forum drew lots of people, questions

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Ahwatukee Foothills residents Monday night asked state and city leaders how to prevent crime and prosecute criminals. They were told to stay involved and keep their eyes open.

A crowd of about 100 pushed state and city officials to boost safety and prevent future crimes during a crime and fraud prevention forum sponsored by Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard, Phoenix Police Department, Phoenix City Councilman Greg Stanton and the *Ahwatukee Republic*.

Goddard has held similar forums in other cities, but he said Monday's drew the largest crowd.

"No surprise Ahwatukee would have the largest turnout," he said.

Stanton, who represents Ahwatukee, said Ahwatukee is an "active community" and that police there "take it personally" when crimes occur.

Attendees asked whether recent graffiti is connected to gangs and were told that it probably was not. They also asked about fraud, how the police address illegal immigrants who commits crimes and other topics.

Phoenix Police Chief Jack Harris, Stanton and Goddard talked about their efforts to prevent and fight methamphetamine use and identity theft.

Representatives from McGruff Safe Kids Total Identification System, Phoenix Block Watch Advisory Board, PAVE: Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment; Phoenix employees and anti-crime groups had tables set up and were providing information.

"If we can get the neighborhood mobilized . . . we can make a difference," Goddard said.

Konnie Sheen asked how the cellular company where she works in Ahwatukee could get police to help fight fraud. When criminals use someone else's identity to open accounts, the cellular company incurs losses, she said.

It's difficult to catch these criminals when they open accounts on the phone or online or give the phones to others, but the cellular companies could be listed as secondary victims, Phoenix Police Sgt. Jason Davis said. Davis offered to work with her and said residents can take steps to avoid becoming victims.

"One of the most important things is to stay on top of what's going on with (your) account," Davis said after the forum.

Ahwatukee resident Mike Durham asked if the speakers would support legislation allowing a police officer to suspend or take away a driver's license from someone that had used methamphetamine.

Stanton addressed Ahwatukee resident Jim Jochim's question about whether the proposed South Mountain Freeway along the Pecos Road alignment would bring more crime to the village.

"I don't know what the effect on criminal activity would be," Stanton said. "I'll find out to the extent possible that can be done."

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